

**South Atlantic**  
***Frequently Asked Questions***  
**Red Snapper in the South Atlantic**  
**May 2015**

**Will red snapper commercial or recreational harvest in South Atlantic Federal waters be allowed in 2015?**

- No, harvest will not be allowed for either sector.

**Is red snapper harvest allowed in state waters?**

- The public should contact each state's fishery management department to obtain the regulations in state waters. Red snapper may not be harvested in state waters on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for snapper-grouper has been issued.

**Why is red snapper harvest not allowed in 2015 in Federal waters?**

- There will not be a season because estimates of red snapper total removals (landings plus dead discards) in 2014 (205,859 fish) exceeded the allowable level (106,000 fish).

**Why is harvest not allowed when estimates of red snapper total removals are greater than the allowable level?**

- In 2013, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council developed, and NOAA Fisheries implemented, a process to determine if a fishing season will occur each year, the allowable harvest, and the season lengths for the commercial and recreational sectors.
- The first step of the process dictates the following:

--A red snapper season may occur when estimates of red snapper total removals are less than the allowable level in the previous year.

--A red snapper season will not occur when estimates of red snapper total removals are greater than the allowable level in the previous year.

- More information on the process may be found here:  
[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/s\\_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html)

### **Who determined the estimates of 2014 red snapper total removals and allowable levels?**

- The 2014 red snapper total removal estimates were determined through an evaluation of the landings and discard information compiled by fishery biologists from the four South Atlantic states (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina) and NOAA Fisheries.
- The 2014 red snapper allowable level of total removals was determined by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, as informed by the most recent red snapper stock assessment, rebuilding projections, and the scientific advice of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.
- The report of the 2014 estimates of red snapper total removals may be found here: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/s\\_atl/sg/2015/red\\_snapper/documents/pdfs/2014\\_sa\\_rs\\_total\\_removals.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/red_snapper/documents/pdfs/2014_sa_rs_total_removals.pdf)

### **What information was used to determine the 2014 estimates of red snapper total removals in South Atlantic waters?**

- The 2014 estimates of red snapper total removals are based on commercial landings and discard data from dealer reports and fishermen logbooks and recreational landings and discard data from federal and state recreational surveys.

### **Will there be a season in 2016?**

- At this time, it is not possible to determine if there will be a red snapper season in South Atlantic Federal waters in 2016.
- The annual process described above will be repeated in 2016, and NOAA Fisheries will announce the results of the process in 2016.
- A new population assessment is underway and is scheduled for completion in spring 2016; the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries will review the results of that assessment in 2016.

### **Who may I contact for more information?**

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5305.
- More information may be found on the following NOAA Fisheries Web site: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/s\\_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html)